MARRIAGE

OF

Cousin Germans,

Vindicated from the Censures of Unlawfulnesse, and Inexpediency.

Being a Letter written to his [illegible] Honour'd T. D.

Nescio quomodo pleriq; Errare maluerunt, Eamq; sententiam, quam adamaverunt, pugnacissimè defendere, quam sine pertinacia, quid constantissimè dicatur, [illegible]rere. Cic. Acad. Quæs. lib. 2.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

READER.

THis following Letter, at the first, I assure thee, was intended only for the eye of some private persons and Friends, and in thinking

upon the Error of the Multitude *in the Case of* Cousin Germans Marriages, *I wish'd indeed their mistake corrected, but did not design to tell them how much they were mistaken. For I am not ignorant how little even things of greater consequence will prevail, when there are great numbers set against them; whom the Reason that cometh from one man can as little conquer, as a single man's Sword can whole thousands, engag'd by Heat and Ignorance in a wrong Cause.*

Besides,

Beſides, ſome who may be my Friends in the Caſe, will not perhaps be ſo in my handling of it, but will think me either flat or triviall; and ſo the Criticalneſſe and curioſity of theſe, will hurt me no leſſe then the rude prejudices of the other. But at the ſolicitations of ſome Perſons, who would not wittingly deſire any thing of me that might be my injury, I was at laſt perſuaded not wholly to refuſe, what I had not the Confidence ſo much as to think of before. And indeed when I conſider

how much some Cousin Germans, *whose prudent Love may have engag'd them in Marriage, have been worryed by the Censures of the* Many; *how some also to their great misery, and sometimes to almost their Ruin, have been croſt by their Friends, who have either thought such Wedlock unlawfull, or else who have set themselves against it out of a Scrupulosity of their own Credit, or perhaps too great a Compliance with some men who love to be offended with many things they have nothing*

nothing to do with; and lastly how others after Marriage, not being able to defend what they have done, have by the misguided zeal of some, been brought to think they have committed a great Crime, and so are made to interpret, whatever Crosse they suffer, to be a judgment upon them for their Loves; I may seem to do not an uncharitable, and ill natur'd action, *if I shall endeavour to strengthen some (who are more nearly concern'd in a good opinion of such Wedlock; and to inform others,*

(who are not engaged,) that so they may not be so hasty to condemn what in it self is very lawfull, and oftentimes may be very expedient. And though I expect to be no lesse Censur'd by some, for pleading for these Marriages then if I my self were a person engaged in them, yet if I can here and there prevail with a few to lay aside prejudice, and correct a mistake so generally receiv'd, I shall think it a good reward for these small Pains I have taken. But, if I may make a wish more then Ordi-

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nary for this Paper, I would Choose one place peculiarly for its good acceptance, and that upon the account of two Persons, whose Credit and Interest is not less dear to me then mine own; and though their Loves are not so slight as that a Censure can shake them; nor they so ill persuaded of the lawfulnesse of such Marriage, as that they will think any affliction they may undergoe with others, or apart by themselves to be a scourge for their Wedlock as unlawfull, yet they will find the more Friends if this

Pamphlet

Pamphlet be well accepted: for the successe of which I shall be very little solicitous, if without it They themselves will be well thought of: a thing which I can very faintly promise to them, since a Mans own Country, is for the most part the least his Friend; and, as if it had a Right so to do, will deal the most uncivilly by him. I have sometimes wondred how this opinion of the unlawfulnesse of first Cousins Marriages *should be so generally received, especially since together with so many other Truths it was got*

out of the Papists *hands, and made free by* Henry 8th, Edward 6th *and the very first Act of* Elizabeth; *when before, it was a matter of* Mony, *and made unlawfull, only that by Dispensations it might increase the* Popes Treasure: *a thing which some, who deservedly are against the usurpations of Rome, do not think of; and if they do, I know not how they will avoid their being really the Popes Friends; since there is nothing in* Scripture, *the Orders of our* Church, *nor in* Reason *that does forbid*

bid it. But I will say no more since I have spoken sufficiently in the following pages; and I am a fraid too largely for such a subject; unless it be to those who are resolv'd before hand not to Change their Opinion; and these, if they will take the pains to read, I am contented should be tir'd.

I have been constraind to answer some Objections which an ingenious Man may think superfluous, but which I chose not to omit, lest they should be urg'd by ignorant men. As if they could not be answer'd and

so

so should be a means of their fnrther Censures and uncharitableneſse. The truth of it is, very few of those who are any whit knowing, do question the Lawfulneſse of the thing; so that what I have written, is for the most part writ to the Capacity of the Common People; and if it be not such as a scholar will read, it is not such as the unlearned will not understand. And it is upon this account especially that I have avoided great numbers of Quotations; which if I had taken, as they are already used, without Consulting

sulting the Authors themselves, perhaps I might have had as good a right to them as some others; for, as one saith true enough, they are oftentimes like Gaping, *that goes from one to another, unquestion'd, and meerly out of Course. But, yet if any one would see authorityes of* Learned men, *and examples of* Cousin Germans *Marriages, he may consult* Gothofrid de nupt. Consobrin: Butlers Syngenia, *and* Bishop Taylors Duct. Dubitant. *And since there are so many who are unknowing*

unknowing in this Case; and I know no Peece in English that peculiarly treats of this subject, but such as cannot be bought alone, or else such as are either too short, or not easily understood, I hope the vulgar will be willing to accept this Paper, and others not unwilling to excuse it.

SIR

Sir.

Have been ſometimes more then a little diſturb'd at ſome men, whoſe *ignorance* hath rendered them very perverſe; and could have wiſh'd a little more of judgement and diſcretion in ſome of thoſe alſo, whoſe conſtant endeavours after knowledg, and Lives ſpent in *Books* and *Learning*, ſhould one would think give them a better inſight into things, then for the moſt part we ſhall find they have.

The Reasons of the errors of these Latter may I think be reduced to one, or all of these Heads.

1. Their making all their *Reading* stoop to those Notions which were instill'd into them when young, by their Fathers or Masters; and the esteeming all as false, which doe differ from those principles they then suck'd in. or:

2dly. Their pleasure in opposing things received for, and which are truth, that soe they may the better be taken for men of parts and greater Learning then ordinary. or.

3dly. Their willingnesse to condemne some things as unlawfull, or, at least, uncreditable that soe they may appear to

to be of a more rais'd *Zeal*, and greater *Sanctity* then other men.

I will content my selfe in the bare mentioning of these things, (though they might bee largely spoken to) and will onely take notice that the perverseness of the Vulgar proceeds from the ill example of these men I now spoke of, whether it be in an affected boasting of *Learning* or *Sanctity*, which is a great Crime; or in a misguided *Piety* which is our great unhappiness. For when they have gotten the Opinion of being Learn'd, judicious, or Zealous, whatsoever they say shall be esteem'd as Gospell; and though Reason shall be able to manifest the contrary, yet because some of them seem to act

by the *Spirit*, their Opinions ſhall be better then others Demonſtrations, and the *Infallible Pope* ſhall be moſt ſet up in thoſe who would be taken to be his greateſt enemies.

Perchance, Sr, you wonder at what I drive in theſe words; and it may be you will think me raſh in my Cenſures. I wiſh Sr I were, for then we ſhould have more of candor and good-nature, and leſſe of *Humor* and *Prejudice* in the world then novv vve have. But ſeeing many lavv-full things are cry'd down, among which none more then the *Wedlock of Coſin Germans*, (a thing which upon the account of a Friend of mine I have no reaſon to ſpeak againſt) I thought to ſet

downe

downe the grounds of mens mi-ſtakes in this and many other actions.

And becauſe the Marriage of firſt Coſins is very innocent, and yet has ſo many enemies, I will in pity ſpeake one good word for it; ſince from a right opinion of the thing, the lives of many would be made, not only more pleaſant, but more fortunate too, and yet no injury done to any man. And ſurely if the lawfulneſſe, and expedience of things do create them an eſteem with prudent men; why, ſuch Marriages ſhould be ſo ſeverely cenſur'd, I ſee no reaſon: for they are in themſelves alwayes *Lawfull*, and ſometimes may be *Expedient*. The proving of which ſhall

the matter of the following pages.

1. *For the lawfullneſſe of them.*

Thoſe things that are not againſt the *Law of Nature*, *the Law of God*, nor *the Law of the Land* cannot but be in themſelves Lawfull; and that theſe Marriages are againſt none of theſe will be manifeſt from the anſwering theſe following *Objections* againſt them.

1. *Their being againſt Nature:*
2. *Their being forbid by Scripture.*
3dly *Their hindering of the ſpreading of Society, and Friendſhip, which is enough among Naturall Relations already.*
4. *The ill proſpering of them.*
5. *Their being forbid by* Theodoſius *and* Arcadius *Chriſtian Emperours,*

perours, with ſevere Puniſhments to Offenders in this kind.

6. *Their not being in uſe with the Primative Chriſtians.*

7. *Their being prohibited by the Apoſtles Canons, and the Canon Law.*

8. *It being unlawfull for Second Couſins to marry, and therefore Firſt may not.*

9. *However, if they are not unlawfull, yet a wiſe man upon the account of Credit will abſtain from them.*

Theſe are the greateſt arguments that I ever heard, or can think againſt them. And though ſome of them may appear plauſible, yet if throughly ſearch'd, will be vain enough and of no force.

1. They say these Marriages are against Nature: for the Images of the Common Parents being not worn out of those who are so nearly related to them, it is a kind of incest for them to mix.

I might here have a fair Field to proceed in, and might prove the Wedlock of First Cousins not to be against Nature, from nearer conjunctions in the Earliest Generations of Man, who when all things else have had a naturall Beginning, cannor be thought to spring from an unnaturall Foundation. But I will not bring any thing here that may be thought by common Capacities to be uncouth; and since the question does not need

it

it I will go to the 2d Objection, and ſhew

That theſe Marriages are not forbid by Scripture; where, if they were againſt Nature, without controverſy they would be directly prohibited.

And indeed ſo great a Reverence have wee for that *Sacred volume*, that we willingly acknowledge our *intereſt* and *affections* muſt vail to it; and even that of our *Love*, which can contemn Honours, quell ambition, trample upon the power of Gold, and conquer all things elſe in the world, ſhall calmly ſubmit it ſelf to thoſe ſupreme Dictates. Nor ſhall we daringly, like ſome, inquire into Gods commands, why *He*, who is

all Goodneſſe, ſhould ſo confine men, and by his Laws make many things to become ſin to them, which otherwiſe would not have hinder'd their well being on Earth, and would have made their Way to Heaven alſo more eaſy to be walk'd in. We acknowledge him juſt, in all his Actings, and will reſt in his reveal'd will (though we do not underſtand the reaſon of it) as proceeding from the Higheſt Wiſdome. Though certainly, in this thing of Reſtraining Marriages, we may eaſily diſcern the *Good of Society*, and the *Peace and Welfare of Families* to be happily contriv'd and commanded.

We will view a little what his will in this preſent Caſe of ours is. And

And ſurely, Sir, among thoſe Relations who are forbid to marry, we ſhall not find the leaſt mention of Couſin Germans. It is ſaid indeed Lev. 18. *That none ſhall approach to any who is near of kin to him.* but all thoſe who by Blood are related, are not to be thought *near of kin*: for the Difference is very great. Only thoſe are properly ſaid to be near of Kin to a man, who are either his *Father*, or *Mother*, his *Brother*, or *Siſter*, his *Son* or *Daughter*, or thoſe who deſcend further from him, or whom he is deſcended from in a ſtraight Line. And that only theſe are meant by near of Kin we may ſee from Lev. 21. 1, 2, 3. *None ſhall be defiled for the Dead among you,*

you, but for his Kin that is near him; for his Father and his Mother, for his Brother and Sister who is a Virgin, for his Son and Daughter; for these He may be defil'd. And if some others Levit. 18, who are more remote, are forbid to marry, it is not because they are properly near of Kin, but or some other reason: for Reverence and Honour, as in the Mother in Law, and some others, or the better securing of those who are truly near, and are by no means to be touch'd. Perhaps, as there were Bounds set round the Mount; not that it was in it self unlawfull to go nearer, but if the People had been permitted that, they would have been apt to profane the *Sacred Hill.* And

that

that Near of Kin is to be taken in this ſtricter Senſe, is manifeſt; elſe how will thoſe who are in more Remote Degrees, and yet tearm'd near of Kin, be permitted Marriage, as *Ruth* 2. 20. where this Phraſe is attributed to Boaz who was to Marry *Ruth*. and 2 *Sam* 19. 42 where all the Men of Judah call *David* their near *Kinſman*?

And indeed had it been unlawfull for Couſin Germans to Marry, He who could not be ſaid to forget, as Men do, who could not over look a thing which he would have obſerv'd by his People for ever, would have told us ſo in as expreſs tearmes as he had ſaid other things.

And

And here we may obſerve that a poſitive Command is not neceſſary for the making things to be Lawfull, but the not being forbid is ſufficient for that. For it is the deſigne of Laws to put limits and bounds to that liberty which we have by Nature, and to oblige us to the obſervance of ſome peculiar commands; and therefore Nature and Reaſon will tell you that where there is no particular Precept or Prohibition to bind us, we are left to our Liberty and Choice, to do, or not to do. And thus a Man may addict himſelfe to Study or Learning, not that he had direct command for it (for with equall Right he might have been a Merchant, or

or of ſome other Calling) but becauſe he is not prohibited by any Law, he may follow what his own Genius and inclination lead him to. And ſo we may Marry a Couſin German, not becauſe we are commanded, but becauſe we are not forbid.

But it may be ſome will ſay that what I ſpeak is true where there is no *Prohibition* at all; but though there be no poſitive nor direct one, yet if there be an indirect and Conſequentiall one, it makes the action unlawfull, and ſuch there may ſeem to be in our preſent Caſe. For albeit in expreſſe terms the Marriages of firſt Couſins are not prohibited, yet from ſome of thoſe that are, we

may

may infer that these are no less: for where there are some who are at larger Distances remov'd whom yet we may not Marry, it may seem by no means fit that those who are nearer should be permitted. I must confess Sir, this would be something if all were forbid there upon the account of Nearness; but there are peculiar reasons for peculiar *Persons* and *Degrees*. Thus, Sir, *my Great Aunt*, or *my sisters Neece* are as far removed from me as a *First Cousin*: and yet who grant *Cousin Germans* may Marry will deny the Lawfulness of the other. Nay suppose an Uncle or an Aunt to be remov'd two or three Degrees further (as we may easily suppose such a thing

thing) from the *Neece* or *Nephew*, it would be unlawfull for these to Marry, though never any denyed that *Third Cousins* might, which yet are as near as these I mention. The reason of this will be seen presently.

And surely *Fist Cousins* are not so little away remov'd from the Common Stock, as by the most they are thought to be. They are in the fourth Degree, as the *Civil Law* do truly account; for so many degrees are to be reckoned as there are persons from the common Parent, so the son is one step remov'd from the father; his son is two. This Sons Uncle is one Degree from the common Parent, his Daughter two. So

that these Degrees added together make four, whence *Cousin Germans* are four degrees distant. Nor can it in reason be thought that they are but so many Steps from one another as they are from the *Common Stock*: for to know their Relation you must run up from the Nephew to the Grandfather, and from the Grandfather down to the Neece; which is to measure four Degrees. And thus *Vlpian. in quarto gradu permittitur Conjugium extra eas personas quæ locum Parentum Liberorumque habent.* Those who are in the fourth degree may marry, unless it be those who are in the place of Fathers and Children; as a great Uncle is to a Neece, or that Neece to her Brothers or Sisters

ſters Grandſon. Here the more they are remov'd the leſſe reaſon there is for their Marrying; becauſe as a Father has a Paternall Right over ten Generations could he live to ſee them ſpring from him in a Direct Line, (his old age requiring from the lateſt Grandchildren *Reſpect* and *Reverence* ſo often encreaſed as the name of father comes betwixt him and them) ſo *Uncles* and *Aunts* ſince they are *quaſi Parentes*, in the place of Fathers and Mothers, muſt have the greater reſpect by how much the more the Name of Uncle and Aunt comes betwixt them and their Nephews and Neeces, ſo that it would be more abſurd for a Great Vncle to Marry his Neece, then

for an immediate uncle to Marry his.

But, Sir, could it not be prov'd by good reason (as I perswade my selfe it is) that Cousin Germans Marriages are not forbid by Scripture, yet the Examples of good men among the Jews, after this *Law in Leviticus* was made, are a sufficient Evidence that they are not unlawfull. The Daughters of *Zelophehad*, *Mahlah*, *Tirza*, *Hogla*, and *Noah* were Marryed to their Fathers Brothers Sons, *Numb* 36. 11. In which place God not only seems to *approve* of their Marriage, but to have *enjoyned* them so do as they did. for it is said *They did as the Lord commanded Moses, and took their Fathers Brothers*

thers Sons. v. 10. Where we may take notice, that this command was given to the Daughters of *Zelophehad* not as if it authoriz'd them for the making of these Marriages which were before unlawfull; nor yet as if it shew'd that such wedlock was never to be made unlesse in the like Case, (for where is there the least appearance that they were before prohibited?) but what was lawfull for all before, who were no nearer of Kin, may seem to be made necessary for *Heiresses*, for you know, Sir, the cause of their Marrying thus, was that their inheritance should not passe from the *Tribe* of their Fathers; and it was thought fit it should stay in their own family too, rather then

goe to *Strangers.* Which thing, it is very likely, from the Jews grew a Custome amongst other Nations also. Thus Terent. in Phorm.

Lex est ut Orbæ, qui sunt genere proximi, His nubant, & illos ducere eadem Hæc Lex jubet.

and for the greater credit of this Instance of *Zelophehads* Daughters, we may observe that none of the Jews afterwards, whether the *Karæi*, or the *Talmudists* (those who stuck to the words of the Law, not admitting any thing else but what could necessarily and plainly be inferred thence, or those who would have their Nicer argumentations and illations, and what is more, the Hereditary transmission of interpretations) did ever codemn the

Marriage

Marriage of Couſin Germans; *Quoniam liquet ex ipſis Scripturæ verbis Zelophehadi Filias nuptas eſſe etiam Patruorum Suorum filiis; adeoque licitum fuiſſe conjugium ubi quis filiam acceperit Patrui, ſeu conſobrinam. Selden. uxor. Heb. Cap. 5. lib. 1.*

But, Sir, to bring one inſtance or two more out of Scripture. we read *1. Chron. 23. v. 21. 22. That Mahli, the ſon of Merari a Levite, had two Sons, Eleazar and Kiſh. And Eleazar dyed and had no Sons but Daughters, and their Brethren the Sons of Kiſh took them.* Perſons certainly, who, ſince they were Levites, had reaſon to know the Lavv, and to practiſe it as well as any other *2. Chron. 11. 18. 20.* Rehoboam

Marryed *Mahalath*, and after that *Mahachan*, who were both his Couſin Germans. A Perſon whom vve read indeed to be a little imprudent in his refuſing the old mens Councell, but who othervviſe vvas innocent in his life. and we may ſay, God took an occaſion from his Father Solomons ſins to afflict him, rather then from his ovvn to puniſh him. 1. *Kings.* 11. v. 11. 12. 13.

But laſtly it is not improbable that *Joſeph*, and *Mary*, the Mother of our Saviour, were Couſin Germans: for othervviſe it cannot ſo well be made out hovv Jeſus was of the Tribe of Judah, and the family of *David*, as vvas propheſied of him. For hee could by no means be ſaid

to

to be the true and Genuine Son of *Joseph*, but only of his Mother. Now only *Joseph's* Genealogy is described by both the Evangelists. *Matthew* bringing it from Solomon the Son of David by Bathsheba, *Luke* from Nathan Davids Son by the same Bathsheba. (Where by the by, we may take Notice, that the Tracer of the Genealogies at the Beginning of some of our English Bibles, is much out. For that by Luke is not *Maryes*, as it is there made to be, but *Josephs*, *Heli* being his Father by *Law*, ~~*Joseph*~~ and *Facob* by *Nature*. *vid. Euseb. Ecclesiast. Hist: cap. 7. lib. 1.*) Some of old (since *Mary* was reckon'd to be of the tribe of Levi as being Kin to Elizabeth who was of the

Daughters

Daughters of Aron *Luke.* 1. 5.) Thought this knot could not be untyed, unleſs they ſhould aſſert that *Jeſus* was ſprung no leſs of *Ioſeph* then of *Mary*, and this Sect Antiquity call'd *Ioſephites*. But this is directly contrary to Scripture, which ſai's, that *Ieſus* was borne of a pure *Virgin*. But if we ſay that *Mary* was Couſin German to *Ioſeph*, the thing is ſolv'd beyond all exceptions; for then Ioſephs Genealogy, to his Grandfather, *Matthan*, will be Maries too; and ſo *Mary* will not only be of the *Tribe* of *Juda*, but of the *family of David* alſo. I muſt confeſſe *Mary* may be of the Houſe of David, and yet not ſo nearly related to *Ioſeph*; but then we ſhall take away the mutuall ſhare

which they Both have (perhaps by a ſpeciall deſign of the Holy Ghoſt) as far as lawfully they could, in the Genealogy; and we might ſay, that *Matthew* and *Luke* direct us indeed to *David*, from whom our Saviour ſprung, but yet ſend us thither the wrong way. And though indeed *Joſeph*, the firſt ſtep backwards in the Genealogy, in reſpect of Blood, has no ſhare in our Saviour, yet ſo little in the whole may be allow'd upon the account of the uſuall Reckoning of Generations among the Jews, who never went by the *Mother*: eſpecially ſince Hee who after *Eſpouſalls*, (as our Saviour *Luke* 1. 2, 7.) is not unlawfully begotten, may juſtly be ſaid to be the Son

of

of the Man, as he is of the Woman; and God may give Children what way he pleases. But though this be sufficient to make *Joseph* the first step of the Genealogy, yet it by no means is sufficient to make our *Saviour*, only by *Joseph*, to descend from *David* according to the *Flesh*. For the making our Saviors Genealogy out, it will be most convenient (might almost say necessary) to think *Joseph* and *Mary* to be *Cousin Germans*; otherwise if you make *Mary* to be of the *House of David*, and yet not nearly related to *Joseph*, our Saviors Line will be right in the End, but not direct in the Way. If you shall make her to be of another *Tribe*, (as some have thought) though I do

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cannot but grant that when two persons of different Tribes did Marry, the Children were reckoned of that Tribe which the Father was of, yet were there nothing but *Joseph* the imputed Father to entitle the *Tribe of Juda*, and the *Family of David* in the Messias, for ought I see, *Levi* would have more reason to boast of our Saviour then *Judah*; and some other Family might claim the Honour of his Birth, rather then Davids; which would be no mean argument in a Jewes mouth for his Obstinate Denying of Christ.

If it shall be ask'd, how then, since *Mary* is made to be of the *Tribe of* Juda, *Elizabeth* could be her Cousin, who was of the Daughters of Aaron, *Luke.* 1. It

may

may be ſaid, that *Elizabeth* alſo was of the *Tribe of Judah*; neither did that *Law* which forbad *Virgins* Marrying into other Tribes, hinder that they might not be Marryed to *Levites*, although they were Heireſſes; becauſe the *Levites* had no Portion of their own, and ſo might make themſelves fortunes out of any Tribe. Beſides, thoſe Virgins that had no lands might Marry where they pleas'd; ſo that Elizabeth was reckoned of the Daughters of Aaron, only becauſe ſhe was the Wife of *Zacharias. See Beza's annot. on Luke* 1.5.

And thus Sir we ſee *C. Germans* Marriages are not ſuch deſperate things, as ſome folks make them to be. If they were, they would

not

not have been commanded in Zelophehads Daughters, nor have been so calmly pass'd over in Meraries offspring, Rehoboam, nor lastly have been contracted in that *blest Pair*, whence the greatest *Purity* and *Holiness* our *Saviour* himselfe sprung: nor do we see the least shew of a Prohibition in the Gospell, so that they must be strangely præjudiced, who will so severely comdemn what is by no means forbid in the *New* Testament, and so well approv'd of in the *Old*.

But, Sir, there is another objection urg'd against these Marriges and that is.

3dly *Their hindring of the spreading of Society and Friendship, which is enough among naturall Relations already*

already, and ſo, by Marriages further from home, ſhould be rais'd up and nouriſh'd in others.

I am ſo great an Eſteemer of Friendſhip that I wiſh not only that it reach'd wider then it doth, but that it were more intenſe and firm in thoſe narrow bounds it has; nay even in many perſons too, whom the cloſeſt Bands of nature, and thoſe more cloſe ones of Choice and Marriage ſhould, one would think, teach the higheſt affection. And you may beleive me, Sir, if by ſo doing I could reconcile the Hatreds and Animoſityes that ſo much rage in the world, I would give up not only my *argument*, but my *Life* too. But, Sir, let it be granted that it is better generally for others

thers to Marry, then *Couſin Germans*, upon the account of ſcattering Friendſhips, yet I hope here and there one *Couſin German* may marry another, and yet no great harm be done to the common Society of Men. *St. Paul ſaies, it is better to continue ſingle then to Marry*, but he did not intend that his advice ſhould, nor think that it would have a Generall effect: and, if all ſhould have took his Counſel, the world muſt have had an end in that Generation, or elſe God muſt have continued it by a Miracle. It is better to marry others then *Couſin Germans*, as it is better not at all to marry, then to marry; but if it were ſo ſtrictly obſerv'd, as to be thought a ſin to be now and

then otherwiſe, I believe and dare affirm it would be a greater Diſadvantage and injury to ſome ſingle Perſons, then it would be an advantage to the *Community*. That man is very unwiſe who would be at great Damages, and would undergoe the hazzard of loſing the pleaſures of his life, and, it may be, Life too(for the effects of a Fruſtrated Love are ſometimes diſmall) out of a principle of ſcattering Friendſhips abroad, which would not the thouſandth part help the Kingdomes peace ſo much as deſtroy his own Happineſſe. Charity and Friendſhip do well abroad, I confeſſe, but they muſt begin at Home; and, however ſome may think, I am ſure thoſe men can little look after o-

thers

thers welfare as they ought, who will be ſlack and careleſſe of their own. If Men were ſo much addicted to the marrying of Firſt Couſins, as to neglect matching with others, it would be well ſome Law ſhould be made by the Civill Magiſtrate for the prohibiting a Cuſtome ſo deſtructive to *Society*; but ſo long as there is ſo good ſtore of *Perſons* and *Faces*, and more wealth too (that great Motive of Love and Matrimony) abroad, then there is, for the moſt part, at home, we need not fear the Love to our Kindred will juſtle out our intereſt elſewhere; and for one match between *Couſin Germans*, I dare be bold to ſay there will be a thouſand of another Stamp.

But, for the ſtrengthening of this and other arguments, they bring this terrible Obſervation, which is a

4th Reaſon, viz. *that Couſin Germans do not thrive, and that God ſhews by the ill proſpering of them that ſuch Marriages are unlawfull, and by no means approv'd of by him.* Which I will ſpeak ſomthing largely to, not that the Objection needs it, but that the cenſorious nature of People, almoſt every where, may ſeem to require it.

I will not, Sir, wiſh they may want good ſucceſſe, who judge of the goodneſſe or illneſſe of an action from the event of it; though, really, I think none deſerve ſuch a wiſh more then theſe.

And I would with all my heart this ſtrange uncharitableneſs did not find a lodging in their Breaſts who would be taken for the beſt Chriſtians; I ſay, I wiſh it be not found as much, if not more, in them then in any others; as if they could not be *pious* unleſſe they muſt pretend to be acquainted with the *Methods of Providence*; and think that God will do nothing, but what he will tell the reaſon of to them. And thus their vain imaginations ſhall be look'd upon as the *Suggeſtions of the Spirit*; their *Daring* and *Preſumption* eſteem'd as *Sanctity* and a *Cloſeneſſe with God*; and what they will interpret to be *judgements*, (and all ſhall be ſo which thoſe ſuffer whoſe opinions and

actions are not juſt as they would have them,) ſhall be judgments in ſpite of *Charity* which they ſhould have as *Chriſtians*, or *Reaſon* which they ſhould have as *Men*. But we will examine.

1. *Whether this be true or no, that Couſin Germans marriages thrive not.*

2. *Whether thoſe, are alwayes Judgments which are thought to be ſo.*

3. *What may be the reaſon of thoſe Couſin Germans improſperity, who really are unproſperous.*

1. *Sir, I can teſtify, it is not alwaies true that Firſt Couſins thrive not.* For I know ſome who have adorn'd their Marriage by their Love, and who have had their Love adorn'd too, with

with the bleſſings of the Earth, increaſe of wealth and Children to poſſeſſe it. And why may not I make an argument for the Lawfulneſſe of theſe Marriages, and their being approv'd of by God, from the proſperity of ſome, as well as they for the unlawfulneſſe of them, and their being dipleaſing to God, from the ill thriving of others? If we will ſearch Scripture we ſhall find that thoſe Familyes which God had a peculiar intent to bleſſe, were to ariſe from the Wedlock of firſt Couſins, Thus the *Daughters of Heth* were not fit Matches for *Jacob*; *and Rebecca's Life* would do her no good if her ſon ſhould take him a wife of the Daughters of the Land.

To Padanaram therefore he must go, and after the Tediousness of *Travell*, (which alone might seem to have deserv'd a wife) serv's seven years for his Cousin *Rachell*; and after a frustration seven yeares more; too hard a task for a thing unlawfull, for a thing that should carry ill *Luck* along with it. But in what was *Jacob* unblest? In nothing surely unless in this, that his Father *Laban* envyed him as being too much blest. The Flocks seem'd willing to change their Master, and would bring forth Ring-straked, Speckled, and Spotted, that *Jacobs* Blessings and wages might be the greater. Thus the man increased exceedingly, had much Cattle, Men-servants and

Maid-

Maid-ſervants, and promiſe that in his ſeed all the Generations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed: I need not ſtay longer upon this, but will take notice of this one thing, viz, that never any Marriage could boaſt of ſuch a Numerous progeny, and ſuch a bleſt People as that Race was which ſprung from the Wedlock of *Firſt Couſins*.

But perhaps, Sir, ſome will ſay that this is an extraordinary inſtance; and ſo is unfit to be brought as an example in this our Caſe; for, 1. *it was before the Law was given, and ſo this Marriage was rather wink'd at then approv'd of. And 2dly it was enjoynd Iacob, becauſe none elſe were fit to be his wives.*

To

To the first, viz, *that this Marriage was before the Law was given, and so was rather wink'd at then approv'd*; we may truly say, that what was not forbid when the Law was given, was not wink'd at but approv'd of before. And so *Jacobs* Marriage with his *Cousin German* is quite of another Nature from his Mrtying two Wives, and them Sisters. for the Matrying two sisters was afterwards prohibited *Levit.* 18.18. *and Bigamy*, though permitted unto them under the Law, was yet forbid them by our Saviour under the Gospel, *Mat.* 19.9. where it is said, *whosoever puts away his wife and Marryes another commits adultery*; and why he should be forbid after a Divorce

Divorce to marry again, if he might Marry two or more wives before, I can't yet conceive. but *Cousin Germans* Marriages were never yet forbidden under the *Law* or *Gospell*, but were once peculiarly commanded, and often had good commendations from creditable exemples, as I have before mention'd.

But here we may take notice that though *Jacob* liv'd before the writing of the Law, and upon that account was excusable in some actions, which were afterwards made unlawfull, yet it is very probable, that there were many precepts, concerning severall things, given by God, even then; whether to *Adam* or *Noah* or to more, I

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am not ſolicitous. And this is manifeſt in *Tamar*, whom *Gen.* 38. *Onan* was to Marry, that he might *raiſe up ſeed to his Brother*. which are the words of Moſes's Law afterwards. And when *Tamar* after *Onans* death was found with Child, and ſo was to be burnt. (which puniſhment denotes another Law, and would have been too ſevere for the fault though a great one, if ſhe had not by right and Law been ſhela's) Juda underſtanding at laſt the whole buſineſs, ſaid, that ſhe was more righteous then himſelf, becauſe he had not given her to *Shela* his other Son. And thus *Grotius de Jur. Pac. & Belli. Has Leges olim datas eſſe cenſent Hebræi, neque id referre*

referre putant quod illud à Moſe ſuo loco narratum non ſit, quia ſatis habuit hoc in lege ipſâ tacite indicaſſe, cùm Gentes extraneas eo nomine damnet. The Jevvs beleeved thatthe Cheif of theſe Lavves were given of old by God himſelf before they were written by Moſes; nor does it vveaken their aſſertion to ſay, that *Moſes* does not openly declare ſo, for it is ſufficient that he tacitly hints it, vvhen he condemns upon this account the nations ofthe Heathens *Levit.* 18. 24. which he could not have done had they not acted againſt their knowledge andthis knowledge, only *Nature*, without ſome *Poſitive Law* from God, could not in many things have acquain-

acquainted them with. And when it is said just after the Catalogue of Marriages *Levit.* 18. *that in All these things the Nations are defil'd, which I cast out before you,* that universall speech may be reduced to the Chief Heads of the Chapter; as the not Lying with Mankind as with Womankind; the not Lying with Beasts, nor with Parents, nor with Sisters, nor others wives; for the preserving of which the more safe, the other lawes were added as a [illegible] or *Fence.* These greater Lawes *Jacob* and the other Patriarcks observ'd fully, which thing the ~~Patriarchs~~ nations did not do. Nor can we think the marrying two Sisters then, as *Iacob* did; nor yet marrying an Aunt,

as

as *Amram* the Father of *Moſes* did, *Exod.6.20.* were the things which the Heathen were condemn'd for. For the Piety of theſe men would not have permitted them to have done ſuch things which they had knovvn to be Crimes, and to be avoided. Nor can we ſuppoſe that God would have united his people in Wedlock that was illegitimate; for this in *Iacob* and *Rachel*, would have been to make *Profaneſſe* adminiſter to *Religion*, and to ſeperate his Choſen ones from the Heathen, by one of the *Vices* of the Heathen. But

2dly, What if I ſhould ſay that *Jacobs* Marriage with *Rachel*, vvas upon the account of *Kindred* and not of *Religion*? *Eſau*l

am

am ſure thought ſo when he in hopes, to pleas his Father, took to Wife *Mabalath* the Daughter of *Iſhmael Abrahams* Son, immediately after *Jacob* vvent to *Padanaram* to pleaſe his Mother *Gen.* 28. 9. and *Laban* thinks it is better to give his Daughter to his *Kinſman*, then to another, vvho is a *Stranger Gen.* 29. 19. and ſurely had *Rachel* been a true Worſhipper of the God of *Abraham* ſhe vvould not ſo Zealouſly have ſtol'n her Father Labans Gods from him; nor have thought it vvorth vvhile to lye for them too, that they might not be found out nor carryed back. Nor yet vvould *Laban*, if he had been vvell acquainted vvith the *Fear of Iſaac*, have polluted his Houſe vvith ſuch

ſuch ſtupid Deityes, have been more ſolicitous for their being taken from him, then for his Daughter and Grand Childrens leaving him after ſo abrupt a manner, He indeed, from *Jacobs* long converſe with him, if from nothing elſe might have learnt that *Abrahams* God was a great God, and fit to be ſworn by, *Gen.* 31.52; but from his joyning *Nachors God* (which Commentators make to be the Sun) with *Abrahams*, whether he was ſo much to be diſtinguiſh'd from Idolaters, as I will not ſtiffly deny, ſo I cannot confidenly affirm.

But, Sr, I muſt confeſſe that theſe men, who ſo much urge ill thriving againſt *Couſin Germans*

Marriages, are in the right; and they too much make their assertions good, by being themselves, and rend'ring others such busy Censurers. For, Sir, it is one part of a Miserable condition to be thought miserable, and to have all the affairs of a mans life scann'd for the finding out ill accidents to discourse of; and Dispensations to comment upon. Thus Sir, if some ordinary neighbour has some Crosse fall'n upon him, men perhaps will not take notice of him, or else will pitty him, and think it no more then what happens to other Men; but if *Cousin Germans* have any misfortune; if an *Horse* dye or the *Orchard* does not hit, you presently know whats the cause of it. If the *Flock of*

sheep

ſheep be leſs'ned by the *Rot*, the negligence or unskilfulneſs of the *Shephard*, or the ill temper of the *Paſture* ſhall not be thought of, but it is an apparent Judgment upon the Marriage. The Children are weak, it may be; grow crooked, or, what is worſe, do not prove well; preſently, Sir, it ſhall be ſaid what better could be expected? an unlawfull Wedlock muſt have an unproſperous ſucceſſe. Whilſt, in the mean time, if they truly love one another, rejoyce in the joyes of each other, grieve in the greifs; if they are ſo intirely affectionate as to further their mutuall content by a mutuall ſweetneſſe of nature, and God, it may be, ſends many bleſſings upon them as a re-

ward of this peacefull behavi our, and virtuous converſe, all this ſhall not be taken notice of; nothing but adverſe affairs ſhall be Eyed and obſerved, and be, perhaps too, made greater by ill interpretations then really they are.

But 2dly, Sir, it will not be from the purpoſe if we ſhall examine *Whether thoſe are to be eſteemed really Judgments which are commonly thought ſo.*

Suppoſe *Couſin Germans* to have greater ſhares of afflictions then others, yet it will be very bold to affirm that God is diſpleas'd with them, and is their Enemy. We ſee Proſperity is not alwayes an attendant on vertue, and an uninterrupted courſe of

Delights

Delights here is not an unerring argument of the Persons goodneſſe.

But, Sir, there is a *judgment* which is ſaid often to accompany theſe Marriages, and that is a *Want of Children* and a *Barrenneſſe*. And I have taken notice of it not only from the Mouthes of ſome, but have ſeen it in print too, and that from no leſs a Man then the *Pope*. *Quædam lex Romana permittit ut ſive fratris & ſororis, ſive duorum fratrum Germanorum, ſive duarum ſororum filius & filia miſceantur; ſed experimento didicimus ex tali conjugio ſobolem non poſſe ſuccreſcere. Reſpons. Gregorij ad 6. interrog. Auguſtini Angl. Epiſcopi.* We have (ſaies he) found by experience

 that

that from such Wedlock there can be no ofspring.

I know not what power his Holyness's will, has over such Marriages in *Italy* to hinder much their Fruitfulnesse; but in England *I* am sure there is no such matter. And you and *I*, Sir, know some who may Count Children with the most of their Neighbours, and who, if that *Roman Law* were in force here, which allowed Mony to the *Father of three Children*, might upon the account of their Ofspring carry away no small reward.

Somtimes we see those, who are no Kin, to be Childlesse; and I remember one Couple of *Cousin Germans* with whom it was so; and another who expected a great

great while ere they had a Child; but at last a Son came, and stopped the Mouthes of some observers, who had gravely pronounc'd *Barrenness* a punishment of the profane Match.

And realy, Sir, (I fyou'l allow me to trifle) I see noreason why they should not have offisprings numerous, as their neighbours. They may be as Strong, and of as healthfull Bodyes as other folk; nor do I see how a *Likeness of Temper and Constitution*, (according to the large talk of some) should hinder Procreation; nor yet why they should be said to be of so like a *Constitution*. I have known even Brothers as Different in their *Tempers* and *Genius's* as they have been in their

Faces. And ſometimes a Child may ſo much follow the conſtitution, and ſhape of the *Father*, that he may ſeem to have very little or none at all of the *Mother* in him, though ſhe bore him. Sometimes the Mother ſo much prevails in his perſon and Temper, that it is only from the Honeſty of the woman, we know who is the *Father*: and ſometimes he may be ſo unlike Both, as if the *Father* had not begot him, nor the *Mother* brought him forth.

Now Sir, ſuppoſe two Brothers Marry two women of different Familyes, and unlike conſtitutions, and the Son of one, and the Daughter of the other take both after the Mother, ſhall

theſe

these be denyed Children upon the account of nearness of Tempers, which I dare say are as far distant as any others? That I may not mention how we Change our Bodyes every seventh year, and so cannot expect to be of the same constitution exactly.

But Sir, (*If I may digress a little*) what if *Cousin Germans* have not so often Children as others? what will their Censures inferre? Truly *I* have been sometimes apt to think that the want of an offspring has not been so great an unhappinesse to some men, as commonly it is imagin'd to be. For what Father almost is there, who has not a greater vexation in his Children, then he would have

have had in a Childleſs condition? Indeed the thoughts of gathering and laying up for a Stranger, and the apprehenſion of having none to continue their Names when they are gone, does oftentimes damp mens Mirth; and make them Melancholy, it being Eſteem'd a more then ordinary Death, to have a Name Buryed too, or elſe to live no where but on a *Tombſtone*, or in the *Church Book*; but yet, Sir, I know ſome who would have been glad it had been ſo with them. Sometimes a fair Progeny ſurrounds the Father, and in the midſt of ſuch attendants he may think himſelf more happy then a King encompaſſ'd with his Peers; but if one of them after

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the coſt, care, and pains of Education ſhall Chance to dye, when grown up to fulfill thoſe hopes ſo long conceiv'd for him (as very often it falls out) the greife at the *Death* of that one, is greater then the pleaſure in the *Lives* of all the reſt. I could tell you of more then one with whom it is ſo at the preſent; who, though it be only the *Diſpoſalls of Providence*, and not their fault in the leaſt, are almoſt drown'd in their own *Tears*. But if ſo much ſorrow follows the Death of a Son, whoſe innocence and Laudable behaviour may have render'd him as fit to dye as to live; the greif muſt needes be greater, when the hopes of a Son, towardly and ingenious whilſt a Boy, ſhall end in an in-

corrigible *Looſneſſe* when grown a man : by which he ſhall be unfit for private affaires or publick imployments. This ſurely is more torturing then if he had dyed in a Blooming age, adorn'd with accompliſhments & vertue.

I might, Sir, Mention the great affliction that ſome men have from their Children when their Number increaſes, and they have not withall to breed them up anſwerable to the Love they have for them, or that condition they themſelves have alwaies liv'd in ; a thing, which, *I* queſtion not, had made ſome perſons reflect upon their once joyfull wedding day with Care and ſorrow ; and wiſh they had either never known Marriage, or had

had been bleſt in a *Barren Vomb*. Good Families there have been who have fallen into the pitty of ſome; and the contempt of others, by reaſon of the great number of younger Brothers, who have been conſtrain'd to take up with mean Courſes of life; and, if compar'd with the grandure of their *Anceſtors*, miſerable ones: whilſt ſome diſdaining ſuch a low condition, as unworthy their *Name* and *Deſcent*, have grown deſperate, and would be any thing, rather then poor men, though at the ſame time they might be *Honeſt* and *Vertuous*. But though the Father be not overburden'd with Children, and has but what he would wiſh for the continuing of his Name and

poſſeſſing

poſſeſſing his wealth, yet if he Chance to live to a good age, it may be, his youngſter may think he takes up too much room in the world, and, though he owes his life, and Education to him, will take it unkindly that he lives ſo long, it is well if he does not endeavour to diſpatch him hence by ſlights and diſreſpect, which are more cruell then the ſlaſhings of a *Sword* and the wounds of an *Enemy*.

But I forget how I have run from the purpoſe and how little I have oblig'd thoſe who are to be Born, as well as thoſe who are; but they look like melancholy thoughts, and not like ſpleen and ill nature; and from them we may ſomthing diſcern, what we were

to

to enquire after. viz.

That they may not be allwayes judgments and Displeasures of God, which are reckoned so by the most. And so they go upon very ill grounds who censure *Cousin Germans* upon that account.

3dly, *I will shew what may be the reason of those First Cousins not thriving, who are really unprosperous*; for I should be very unwise if I should think all live happy.

There are many things in the world, Sir, that may render men unblest. *Injustice* and *Oppression* may canker an Estate, and it may, by a secret hand of *Providence*, be diminish'd amidst those arts that seem to increase it. The Falling of a mans fortune is a very intelligible

gible consequence to *Sloth* and *negligence*, and a just punishment too. Diseases may be the effects of *Riots* and *Intemperance*, and the sickly constitution of Children also, and their immature Deaths be caused by the guilty *Delicacy* and *Luxury* of their Fathers; and so severall sins shall have their severall punishments avvaiting them.

Novv, Sir, if *Cousin Germans* could not be staind, with such Crimes, as well as any others, we might with more probability lay all the fault upon their Marriages. But *I* vvill not say but they may be as Wicked as their neighbours, and I doubt not but they have been. And so they shall have ill thriving vvithout doores for such

ſuch Crimes; and if within Doores the *Curtains* ſhall have more *Lectures* then the Bed has Love, and quarrels and jarrs ſhall take place where meek and quiet affection ſhould dwell, why may not the ill nature of the Wife, or the Croſs-graindneſſe of the Huſband be the Cauſe; when, 'tis very likely, had the *Scold* been Marryed to any other, the Caſe had been the ſame; or had the *Churle* lighted on another Wife, her life would not have been leſſe miſerable then her's he now has?

But, Sir, I will not deny but *Couſin Germans* may have, and have had unhappineſs from their Marriages; which they would not have had if their Choice had been made elſwhere; but that theſe

have been judgments upon their Wedlock, as unlawfull, or unchristian, I will not, dare not grant; but will manifest whence these Mischiefs may take their *Rise*.

And 1. you will easily grant me that *Love* is greater somtimes then *Reason*, and renders the persons that are in Love blin'd to all things but the Faces they look upon, and it may be Cheats their sight there too.

2dly You will grant me that a thing though lawfull, if it be not thought lawfull, and be done either through rashnesse or willfulnesse, will afterwards not only be imputed to the Agent as a Crime, but will carry that *Remorse* along with it, and cause those

those dire consequences, which attend and follow that which in it self is really guilt and wickedness.

Now, Sir, I question not but sometimes the Love, which ignorant *C. Germans* have, may stifle all the thoughts of either the unlawfulness, or discredit of their Marriage. They cannot awhile to think so unpleasantly; they are willing it should be lawfull, and that is argument enough at present that it is so. A smile from a Mistresse shall conquer an ill look'd suggestion, or the unwelcome caution that a Friend gives. They are over head and Ears in Love, and it shall not be said they were frighted or threatned from a long'd for Wedding Day, or, it

may be, an Eſtate which could not have been ſo well obtain'd elſwhere. Thus they in a Blind paſſion ruſh into Matrimony, and hamper themſelves in *Cords* which muſt not break till with the *Thread of Life.* And now when the *Hony Month* (as they ſay) is over, and their cloy'd love will give them leaſure to think ſeriouſly, they begin to queſtion whether they Marryed lawfully or no; They now can hearken to folks who ſay that First Couſins never thrive, and they are almoſt perſuaded they have been too raſh in that which is the greateſt affair of a mans life. Their Hearts which knew nothing but love before, now begin to let in remorſe; and that Face, which

erſtwhile

erſtwhile ſo much pleaſed, now only minds them of their inconſiderateneſſe and guilt. And thus the next Croſſe they ſuffer ſhall be look'd upon as a juſt judgment upon them, and a cruell earneſt of more that will follow. And how ſhall they comfort one another in their afflictions by their Love, when they think their Love is the cauſe of their afflictions? And ſo their ignorance makes them deſpond, and renders them unfit for the preventing of future evils. For they think it to very little purpoſe to ſtrive againſt thoſe Puniſhments which Heaven has deſign'd for them. And ſo by a ſullenneſſe and ſtupidity they neglect the affairs of the world, and make themſelves mi-

ſerable, when it may be, Heaven never intended they ſhould be ſo.

But theſe evils, Sir, are prevented when *Couſin Germans* are perſuaded of the Lawfulneſſe of the great affairs they undertake and go upon *ſure* grounds. When they begin their Love in innocence and continue it in vertue. When if they ſuffer ſome affliction they will endeavour to chear one another in the bearing of it, and contrive by an active induſtry to prevent ill thriving for the future. If more croſſes fall upon them, they will think it is better with them however then with many others. They will call in their Piety, as well as Love, to aid in the undergoing them, and will

endea-

endeavour by an innocent and vertuous converso deserve them as little as may be.

And thus, Sir, I have at large examined that Objection against *Cousin Germans* Marriages, viz. *The ill Thriving of them.*

A 5t argument against these Marriages is a Law made against them by Theodosius and Arcadius Christian Emperours. And the great Punishments they inflicted upon offenders in this kind, which would not have been done if such Wedlock had not carryed a great deal of guilt along with it.

It is true that there was such a Law made; but the cruelty of it may be tax'd more then the justice of it commended. But yet St. *Am-*

broſe, who was the Cauſe of this Law, and who ruled the Emperour, teſtifyes in his 66 *Epiſtle*, that it was ſomtimes diſpens'd with by *Theodoſius*: which it is probable it would not have been, if St. *Ambroſe* had thought it in all caſes unlawfull. But while the St ſaid it was prohibited, I know no reaſon why we may not ſay he was miſtaken; and thus *Martyr. Claſſ. 2. cap. 10. ſect. 47. quòd verò Ambroſius affirmat Conſobrinorum conjugium lege divina eſſe prohibitum, nullis qui verba legis Dei, & facta Patrum attentiùs conſiderant probari poterit.* *Arcadius* alſo by the example of the Emperour his Father forbid theſe Marriages *anno* 396, yet ſo as that he Mitigated the puniſhment

niſhment his Father appointed to delinquents in this Caſe, but afterwvards anno 405 he repeald his ovvn, and Fathers ſtatutes a-gainſt them, and made them as Lavvfull as any others. *Inſtit. lib. Tit:* 10. *Impp. Acad. & Hon. A.A. Entychiano P.P. Celebrandis inter Conſobrinos Matrimoniis licentia legis hujus ſalubritate indulta eſt; ut revocata priſci juris authoritate, reſtinctiſq; Calumniarum fomentis, Matrimonium inter Conſobrinos habeatur legitimum; ſive ex duobus fratribus, ſive ex duabus ſororibus, ſive ex fratre & ſorore nati ſunt: & ex eo Matrimonio editi, Legitimi & ſuis Patribus ſucceſſores habeantur. VVe grant a Liberty for the making Marriages between* Couſin Germans

mans, *by reason of the wholsomness of such a Law. That the authority of Ancient Statutes being reestablished, and all grounds of Murmuring and Calumny taken away, the Wedlok of First Cousins may be esteem'd lawfull. Whether they are two Brothers Children, or two Sisters, or else one the Brothers the other the Sisters; and those that are born in such Marriage shall be accounted Legitimate, and the true Heirs of their Fathers Estate.* This Law is vindicated by *Gothofrid* in his notes upon the 3. *Code of Theodos. Tit.* 12. Where many more things to this purpose. Before Theodosius his time they were not forbid, as that Clause in the statute (viz. *Revocata prisci juris authoritate*) shews. and St.

August.

Auguſt. de Civitate Dei lib. 15 cap: 16. has it thus, *nec divina Lex has nuptias (conſobrinorum ſcilicet) prohibuit, & nondum prohibuerat Humana.* But that we may be juſt, and not uſurp a part only of what he ſaies, we will take in what he further adds, which is, *Raro per mores fiebat quod per leges licebat, & factum licitum horrebatur propter vicinitatem illiciti.* The *Firſt Chriſtians* very ſeldom made theſe Marriages, though they might have done it lawfully. And they ſhunned this lawfull thing becauſe it was ſo near to what was unlawfull; which is the.

6th Objection; viz: *Couſin Germans Marriages are to be avoided, becauſe they are ſoe near to what*

What is forbid; and he that will go to the outmoſt ſtep of a lawfull thing ſeldome ſtayes there, but falls into guilt.

That I may the better anſwer this, I will firſt conſider the *Primitive Chriſtians* example mention'd by *Saint Auguſt.* The great Zeale they ſhew'd not only in this but many other things, and their confining themſelves in narrower Bounds then God had done, I will ſay was commendable then, when they had many malicious obſervers, and when their more then Ordinary ſtrictneſs was to commend their Profeſſion, which had it's Birth but newly before: but I cannot ſay we are in every thing to imitate them now; for neither are we bound

bound to make distribution of our Estates, nor to receive the Communion every day, nor, if Persecution should come, anxiously to seek after Martyrdom; things which They did as will be seen by any who look into the first ages of the Church. And why may we not, if God has indulg'd us a liberty, make use of it with Cheerfulness when there is an occasion, as well as avoid with detestation what he has prohibited us? upon the account of unlawfull things to abstain from things that are lawfull and sometimes expedient, shewes many times a greater *Fear of God* for his punishments, then it does a *Love* to him For his Mercyes; which is a temper that God is

ſo well pleaſ'd with. If we keep our ſelves unpolluted with thoſe things which are forbidden, we ſhall not be blamed for now, and then making uſe of thoſe things which are indulg'd us. And if we ſhall, out of an affected preciſeneſs or prejudice, avoid at all times the doing them, and cenſure others that ſhall do them, we ſhall have only this as a reward, viz. *Who has required theſe things at your hands?* and it is well if our Cenſuring and condemning others (although it may ſeem to be an *Effect of Piety*) be not more puniſh'd then ſome things that are agreed upon by all to be ſins.

But yet I don't ſee any ſtrength this argument has, viz. that *Couſin Germans*

Germans Marriages are to be avoided because they come so near to the Prohibition.

There are many things that are but one remove from the unlawfullness, which yet are very usually done without offense; and, I may say, should this argument hold, even Justice, in its proper sense, must never be exercised. To give a man but just his *Due* is the next door to injuring him, and rendering him lesse then his *Right*; but there is none but will grant that I am not bound at all times to be Liberall, which is to be more then just. And though in Punishing, the Jevvs gave but fourty strips save one, vvhich vvas one lesse then they might lavvfully have done *Deut.* 25. 3.

yet

yet it is probable, that it was not that they might not goe at any time to the extremity of the Law, but that they might not exceed. For they usually beat offenders with a *Whip* which had three lashes; so that every stroke stood for three, and, if they had given one more, would not have been fourty, but fourty two. Though, if they did abstain from the exact Number of Stripes out of design, it was but a prudent prevention of their anger which sometimes might have made them forget, and so might have urg'd them to excess: and it is probable that that *Passion* which might have carryed them on beyond forty, might have made them forget the just thirty nine, and sometimes give

give one more; which yet they were not guilty of, if the ſcourge being Single, they lay'd on no more. And indeed, if we conſider how many Marriages there are made which are at the greateſt Diſtance from thoſe Degrees forbid; and how few there are, and are like to be (though we ſhould generally have a better opinion of them) that will reach to the very outſide of our liberty, we may not I think fear our entrenching upon Gods Lawes in this Caſe more then in others: eſpecially, ſince in this matter, there is an *Averſion*, which by early inſtillings, and a deep rooted conſent of all, grovvs up together vvith us, and vvill not quickly leave us.

But thoſe that affirm *Couſin Germans* Marriages to be the very next to thoſe vvhich are forbid, are not ſo unqueſtionable in their aſſertion, as the moſt imagin, and though I may let them alone, whilſt they think ſuch Wedlock but one remove from unlawfull; (for they do not injure our Caſe in the leaſt as *I* but now ſhevv'd) yet not a few of the Hebrevvs, and ſome Learned men ſince, have been of *Opinion*, that *Unkles* and *Neeces*, vvho are one degree nearer then *Couſin Germans*, are not forbid *Levit.* 18. Nor does it follovv by an undoubted conſequence that, becauſe *Aunts and Nephevvs* are forbid, therefore *Uncles and Neeces* are. For the Caſe is Different. If the *Nephew* ſhould

ſhould Marry the *Aunt*, then ſhe vvho is by nature his *ſuperior*, is made as ſhe is his vvife, his *Inferior*; but the Neece is alvvayes belovv the Uncle, and ſo the order of nature not inverted. *Menoch. Corn. à Lapide. Epiſcop. in 1. Cap. Mat.* And though indeed the Reaſon mention'd *Levit.* 18. Why *Aunts* and *Nephews* ſhould not Marry, may ſeem to be *Nearneſs of Kin*, and ſo may reach the *Vncle* and *Neece*, and make their Marriage as unlavvfull, as the other, yet their is a Difference. The *Nephew* muſt not Marry the *Aunt* becauſe, (*Verſe.* 12.) *ſhe is his Fathers near Kinſwoman.* It is not ſaid *His*, but *his Fathers*; Him, vvhom in Her He ſhould honour; but vvhom

he could not, in making her subject to him, as a Wife ought to be. But it is other vvise vvith the Neece; and though indeed her Uncle is her Fathers near Kinsvvoman, yet the Honour she should shevv to him as such, vvill not be overthrovvn by his becoming her Husband, since as he is her Head he is to be Reverenc'd by her Nachor Marryed Milcah who vvas his Brother Harans Daughter, and so his Neece. and *Abraham* Marryed *Harans* other Daughter, vvho vvas his Neece also. *Gen.* 11. 29 for *Iscah* there mention'd is *Sarai* as *Josephus* and the best *Commentators* understand it, and as it vvill appear to any one, vvho rightly considers the place. *Sarai* indeed is said to be Sister to *Abraham*,

ham, but as Lot was his *Brother* when he was his *Brothers Son*. *Gen.* 12.5. *Othniel* the ſon of *Kenaz Calebs* Brother took to wife *Achſa* the Daughter of *Caleb*; *Joſ.* 15. 17. Where if *Othniel* was *Calebs* Brother (as ſome think he was) he Marryed his *Neece*. *Herod* the Great Marryed his *Brothers* Daughter, and gave his own Daughter to his Brother *Pheroras*. *Joſeph. Antiq. Lib.* 12. 16. Which yet *I* bring, not as carrying any authority as being the Action of *Herod*, who vvas as little *a good man* as he vvas a *Jew*, but becauſe Joſephus does not in the leaſt ſeem to condemn it, as a thing unlavvfull or unuſuall. We may think there vvere many ſuch Marriages among the

Jews though vve read not of more; the Genealogyes in Scripture being nothing in respect of those vast numbers among the Hebrevvs, the *Tables of whose Descents, Herod* destroy'd, that Himself might the better appear to be of the *Race* of the *Jewes*. Hence may be that of *Tacitus*, *nova nobis in Fratrum filias conjugia, at aliis gentibus solennia, nec lege ulla prohibita. The Marryage of Vncles and Neeces with us is a new thing, but among other Nations it is usuall and forbid by no Law.*

I have mention'd these things, not that I vvill make any use of them for the proving the Marriage of *Cousin Germans*; nor that *I* am my self svvay'd by them to an assent, (for such Mixtures are thought

prohibited

prohibited by *Arch Bishop Parkers tables*, which *I* by noe means question) but that They, who are so much against First Cousins Wedlock, upon the account that it is but one Step remov'd from that which is unlawfull, may see that their Reason has been question'd for the *Truth*, as well as it justly may for the *weakness* of it. *Athanasius in Synopsi scripturæ ad calcem* Numeror: very respectfully speaks of *Cousin Germans* Marriages, Πρόσταγμα τὸ Κυρίου καὶ νόμιον, νόμιμον εἶναι γάμον τὴν πρὸς ἀνεψιὰς συζυγίαν. *It is a Law and ordinance of God that the Wedlock of First Cousins should be esteem'd Legitimate.* From which Place, and from that of *St Austin*. which *I* mention'd but now (viz. *Nupti-*

as has nec Divinam Legem & nondum Humanam Prohibuisse) we May find an answer to the.

7th Argument; namely, *that the Apostles Canons forbid these Marriages*. For *if that Canon, at least which* prohibits the Wedlock of *Cousin Germans*, had either then had a being, or not been Spurious, Athanasius or Saint August. Would, in all probibility, have taken notice of it.

For the other part of the Objection, *viz, that the Canon law (good part of which is observ'd by our Church) is against these marriages*, we cannot but grant; but if this Law should generally prevail with us, Spirituall Kindred also, as Godfathers and Godmothers, and their Children too must

not

not Marry. But that the Pope, who for *Holineſſe* ſake vvill prohibit Marriage to ſuch Spirituall Relations, vvill for *Lucre* ſake diſpenſe vvith it, not only to them, but to thoſe alſo, vvho are more nearly allyed in Blood, may be ſeen from the *Houſe of Auſtria*, and the *Kings of Spain*, in a more then Ordinary Manner. For *King Philip the 2d* might have called *Albert Arch Duke of Auſtria, Brother, Couſin, Nepbew* and *Son*; *being Uncle* to *Albert* himſelf, and *Couſin German* to his Father, Huſband to his Siſter, and Father to his Wife: for he Marryed *Alberts* Siſter, and then *Albert* Marryed his Daughter: hovv many diſpenſations muſt his Holineſſe grant here, and vvhere is the poor

Canon

Canon Lavv vvhen large ſumms appear?

But for a vvhole anſvver to vvhat ever from that Lavv can be brought againſt *Couſin Germans* Marriages, I vvill cite one clauſe of an *Act of Parliament Anno. 32. Hen. 8. cap. 38.*

Since by reaſon of other prohibitions then Gods Law admitteth, which were invented by the Court of Rome (the Diſpenſation whereof they alwayes reſerv'd for themſelves, as in Kindred or Affinity between Couſin Germans, which yet were Lawfull, and not prohibited by Gods Law, and all becauſe they would get mony by it) many Suters of Law with wrongfull vexations, and great Damage of the innocent Partyes have been procur'd, and many juſt Marriages

brought

brought into doubt and danger of undoing &c. Bee it therefore Enacted by the King, Lords Spirituall and Temporall, that such Marriages shall be taken and judg'd to be Lawfull, Just, Good, and Indissoluble. (which Clause of the Act though the Rest of it was repeal'd was signally established anno 1° Elizabethæ. *cap.* 1.

8ly. An usuall Objection it is, and almost in every Bodyes Mouth, *That second Cousins may not Marry, and consequently that First may not.*

I vvould fain knovv vvhere this prohibition is, for I must confess, I never yet understood vvhence this *Saying* should take its rise I have heard of it often spoken, but vvhen I have ask'd upon

on what grounds they have ſaid ſoe, they have referr'd me to the *Bible*, and the *Table hung up in Churches*. Thus ignorance and Miſtakes ſometimes will have Divine authority to uphold them. indeed a Readineſs to beleeve, what the *Scripture* and *Church* do ſay, does deſerve a good commendation; but it is a Sign of a great weakneſs, or negligence, to be over haſty of Beleef, before we are ſure the *Bible* and the *Church* do ſay ſo, Though ſurely, as to the *Church*, there are few who erre this way, for now a dayes, That is as much ſlighted by a great many, I (the more is our Sorrow) as the Scriptures are little underſtood, as they ſhould be. And I may truely affirm,

that the taking things for granted from the assertions of some men, (whose *Zeale* (that I may not give it a worse word) is greater then their *Knowledge* or *Reason*) and not rightly consulting the Scripture, and meekly submitting to the Judgment of the Church, has been the occasion of more mischeif, then by a great deal of piety can be took away. I need not tell you Sir, there is no such thing in the *Bible* as a Prohibition of second Cousins Marriages; and I am sure in *Arch Bishop Parkers Tables* we may find all Marriages forbid as soon as These. But since I have prov'd by reason and example, that the wedlock of first Cousins is lawfull; and have, or at least

shall

ſhall anſwer the objections brought againſt them, there is none ſure who will read this Paper, that will queſtion the Marriage of Second Couſins. A thing indeed which ſince it is an error of the *Multitude*, and had no ground at all, deſerv'd to be laugh'd at, rather then ſpoken to. But.

The 9th, and, which is the moſt materiall argument, is this.

Suppoſing the Marriages of Couſin Germans to be lawfull, yet a wiſe man upon the account of Credit will abſtain from them.

A good report indeed is better then great Riches; and he is very unwiſe who will loſe it when with *Honeſty* he may keep it.

But

But yet Sir to be fooliſhly ſcrupulous in ſome actions that are not unlawfull, upon the ſcore of an empty praiſe, and to ſhun a conſiderable advantage for fear of a Cenſure from the giddy vulgar, is the way to loſe credit with wiſe men, whileſt we ſtrive to preſerve it. It is a ſign of a very weak Soul to be over much concern'd at the Praiſes or Diſpraiſes of the *Many*, when we our ſelves are ſure our actions are in themſelves juſt and commendable. And though, Sir, I would be loth to be ſpoke, or thought ill of, even by the meaneſt, yet I would not purchaſe the good opinion of the Beſt, with the loſſe of the leaſt vertue, or what is next precious to vertue,

tue, the greateſt comfort of my Life.

I think Sir, I ſhall not injure their argument, if *I* ſhall conſider Credit.

1. *As it has Relation to the opinions of ſome Learned and good men, who have been, and ſome who now live, that are againſt the Marriage of Couſin Germans.*

2dly *As it has Relation to ſome Weak Chriſtians who will be offended, and Scandaliz'd in ſuch an action.*

To the 1ſt. Sir, *namely the Opinions of Learned and good men I can ſay this;* That though I reverence Piety and eſteem Learning, yet as in matters of Faith and Religion, I muſt not bee led by any man againſt a well grounded

ed perſuaſion, ſo in the greateſt concerns of Life (as a *Wife* ſhould bee) it would be a manifeſt *Folly* to be overaw'd by a grave *Look* and a *Stately ſaying*, when it carries only the authority of the Perſon, and ſhews me no reaſon for it. And I dare ſay for my Friend that if any man can ſhew him better reaſon againſt it, then he can for it, he will in point of Conſcience forgoe his *Love*, which I think is not of leſs length then his *Life*.

Nay ſome there are who ſay that theſe Marriages in ſome caſes are very expedient; and thoſe who do diſlike them, do it, for the moſt part, upon this account, that they are not well reliſh'd by the Common people. Now

ſince the *Vulgar* ſo much eſteem theſe Good men they talk of, and are ſo ſtiff in urging their Authority, me thinks they ſhould conform to their more Clear judgments; and not by a Folly, and ill nature, perſiſt to ſtrengthen thoſe arguments which were drawn only from the perverſneſs, and ignorance of the *multitude*. A frowardneſſe of Humor which theſe good Men do, or ſhould like a great deal worſe then the common people do theſe marriages.

Sometimes I have thought how ſtrangely we have loſt our Liberty in a too much yeilding to the ignorance and Humors of the Vulgar. So that at firſt what was only our *modeſty* and *kindneſſe* to them,

them, is reckon'd now their *Due*; and not to obey their cenſures is look'd upon as our *immorality*, and *crime*. I know not whether in ſo doing we have injur'd our ſelves or Them the more. Our ſelves in bringing our Reputation into ſuch narrow, and dangerous Limits, Them, in permitting them to have ſuch erroneous, and falſe conceptions of things, which not only is the occaſion of, but many times is ſin to them. I will not undertake to preſcribe a way how theſe things ſhall be remedyed, (for I am ſufficiently conſcious of mine own meanneſs, and ſo am fitter to be inſtructed my ſelf e then in ſuch important dictates to teach others,) but really I know no better method

then that ſome men, who are noted for men of Piety and Learning, ſhould act now and then ſome of thoſe Lawfull things, though they are unuſuall, and eſteem'd by ſome unlawfull, that ſo, by their example, the common people may be undeceiv'd; and our Credit, in a thouſand affaires, freed from that tickliſh eſtate it is now in. And by this means we may lay a good foundation for the ſtrengthning of *VVeaker Brethren*, which was the ſecond thing to be conſider'd.

Couſin Germans Marriages, though in themſelves not unlawfull, are yet to be abſtain'd from as uncreditable and inexpedient upon the

ſcore

ſcore of ſcandalizing VVeaker Brethren.

In the conſidering of this we will ſee who are meant by *VVeak Brethren*, and how theſe are to be dealt with, the through ſtating of which, would take up a great Deal more time then *I* am willing to beſtow upon it at preſent. *I* will therefore diſpatch in as few words as *I* can; for *I* fear, Sir, *I* have tir'd you no leſs then my ſelf.

Firſt Then; Thoſe who will be offended at every thing out of a Croſs-graind Humour, who will make *Piety a Cloke of Maliciouſneſſe*, and will put on the *Face of a Saint* that they may the more ſecurely diſturb our Chriſtian Liberty, and render others diſaffe-

cted to us; who will willingly distort our Lawfull actions into ill Precedents for their own wicked Deeds; these *I* say are rather to be scourged then yeelded to, and are to be accounted the *Strength of the Divell*, rather then the *Weakness of Christianity*.

Those only are to be esteem'd *Weak Brethren*, who out of sincerity of Heart are Scrupulous of many things which yet are Lawfull; or who will be apt to make an ill use of our *Liberty*, and take incouragement thereby to sin.

2dly. These we must have a tender respect for, and be very carefull how we put a stumbling Block in their way.

What this carriage of ours should be towards them, I will lay

lay downe in theſe two poſitions.

Firſt. When we ſee our Brother will be offended at our action, and be put in a fair way through our liberty to commit ſin, although our action in it ſelfe be very Lawfull, yet if we can wave it without any great damage or diſadvantage to our ſelves or others, who are related to us, we ought in Charity to do ſo: and this will appear from *Romans.* 14. 21. *Rom.* 15. 1, 2, 3. 1. *Cor.* 8. 13. But.

2dly. If the action be of very great concernment, and ſuch as will influence on Life and the well being of it, although our Weak Brother will be offended at it, we are not bound to forego

it. For this would be to give the upper hand in the world to Ignorance and unſettled Judgements: to make Weakneſſe the controler of the important affaires of ſociety, and to permit Fools to ſway the Scepter over the wiſe and Prudent. ſhould this be permitted, for ought I ſee in our preſent Caſe, the Miſtreſs's Grant, and the Parents conſent would be very ſmall and inconſiderable things; ſince every Weak Brother might contradict them, and every Melancholy man in the Pariſh forbid the Banes. Such as theſe muſt be inſtructed; and if they are Chriſtians, as well as Weak, they will be willing to be taught; if they are ſtiffe in their Opinions, and will not yield to a good natur'd

natur'd admonition they are worthy of *Pity*; but a *Pity* that muſt be ſhew'd in an angry look, and cloath'd with a Chiding and a ſharp Reproofe. It will be well indeed if the proſperitie of our Brothers Soul and Body ſhall attend our floriſhing Condition; but if his negligence and ſtubbornneſſe will not permit it to be ſo, there is a *Scandal taken* indeed; but none *given*. He will be unhappy, but we ſhall not be guilty, he is to be pityed, but we not to be blamed. Thus, Sir, I have conſider'd this laſt argument, though in ſhort, yet in its greateſt ſtrength: and have alſo ſhewn that theſe marriages are confirm'd by the Lawes of the Land (made

by

by the most Reverend of the *Clergy*, and the most prudent of the *Laity*) as well as approv'd of by the Laws of God: so that the man must be strangely Obstinate or stupid, who will not yield to the Lawfullness of them.

For a Close of all, I will in a word or two shew (what at the first I propos'd) the Expedience of *Cousin Germans* Marriages, and the Conveniences of them, sometimes beyond those of others. And indeed they are very considerable.

First. *Cousin Germans have more reason to know one anothers Tempers and Humors from their dayly converse, and Education oftentimes together.* And so being throughly acquainted, their Marriages

Marriages are not ſo much Lotteryes as others are. And ſurely, if we ſhould (as the proverb ſaies) *Eat a Peck of Salt with a Man before we Make him our Friend*, it would not be amiſſe if we ſhould eat two with a *VVoman*, before we make her, the moſt important of all *Friends*, a *VVife*. I queſtion not but the ſhort acquaintance of ſo many in the world, before they Marry, is the cauſe of ſo much unhappineſs in *VVedlock*, before that of a *Single Life*. and *I* dare be bold to ſay, that the moſt do not *Marry* the Perſon they think they *joyn Hands* with. For, Sir, Men and Women are not to be eſteem'd by their Faces, nor by their words; *It* is not the Faireſt *Body*

that

that alwayes carryes the beſt *Soul*; and ſometimes *I* have thought that whilſt Providence has commended ſome deform'd Perſons by a quick and brave mind, it has ſet off ſome meaner Souls by a ſpecious outſide, and handſome Stature; that in all there might be ſomthing worthy of praiſe. And then, Sir, it is the fault of young Perſons (and more then them too) to be too much taken with good words, and to eſteem Perſons, and things rather by their hopes (which are for the moſt part too high and extravagant,) then by their Knowledg, (which is too ſeldome ſure and well grounded) which unhappineſſe women are in an eſpeciall manner incident

dent to, as from ſome other accounts, ſo from their power of Chooſing them Husbands only out of thoſe who come *Suitors* to them; it being reckoned a piece of immodeſty in them to look abroad, and be their own Carvers, a priviledge, which men have before them. Beſides, Sir, it being counted a Diſcredit, and a Contemptible thing to be a *Stale Maid*, and ſome thinking the *Leading Apes in Hell* to be the greateſt Puniſhment there; Fearing alſo, that vvhen ſuch or ſuch an admirer is caſhierd they ſhall never have another, or, at leaſt, not a great vvhile, that pleaſes them ſo well, (afflictions too great to be born in this world) their Love Paſſi-

on

on is quickly kindled, and when it is kindled Flames vehemently; Thus having Love ſworn to them in Paſſionate expreſſions, and being made acquainted that they are *Nymphs*, and *Goddeſſes*; and are made up of *Diamonds Rubyes*, *Fair Roſes*, *Warm Snow*, and the like; (things which they never knew before, and now begin almoſt in Earneſt to beleeve) they give away themſelves the ſooner, for being made ſo precious, and raiſed to ſo high a value, whilſt on both ſides the Partyes are miſerably Cheated, and a Cloud is embraced inſtead of *Juno*: a Cloud that is big with Tears, and weighty with Sorrows.

2dly another convenience of

Couſin

Couſin Germans Marriages is that which is urg'd by many as a great Objection againſt them, viz, *Their having the ſame Kindred, and their Equally ſharing in the praiſes and diſpraiſes of the Common Stock*: ſo that they are free, for the moſt part, from thoſe jarrs that ariſe from the reflexions on the Meanneſs and Greatneſſe of Parentage. There is nothing ſwells perſons more then the thoughts of an *High Birth*, And nothing commonly ſhall ſit more uneaſy upon one unequally yok'd then the Name of Family and Relations. Which thing unleſſe there be Prudence on both hands to correct it (as it canont be often expected, ſince there are more *Fools*

then

then wife) will breed Feuds and quarrels, and make Wedlock very unpleasant. But where there are Equall Descents (as in First Cousins usually there are) upbraidings are taken away. If their Births are Creditable, their Gloryings meet, and joyn in Consent. if they are low and mean, their mouths are stop'd; since they cannot lash the other, but they must wound themselves.

These two conveniencyes, Sir, are something, but when they are joynd with a *Cousin German* who is an Heiress of an Estate which hath belong'd to the Name and Family, it may be, for some Ages (as sometimes it may fall out) and she has a *Cousin German*

German whom she can love, and who is not unworthy of her, it will not be only convenient, but Expedient they should Marry. And it was upon this account that *Zelophehads* Daughters, and other Heiresses among the Jewes were commanded to Marry into the Family of their Fathers; and the next of that Family, it was thought good, should have that priviledg before others. Which Custom (as I said before) it is probable other Nations took up from the Jews.

Hic meus Amicus illi genere est Proximus, Huic Leges cogunt Nubere hanc. Ter. Adelph

And thus, Sir, I have considered these Marriages in fewer

words then I might have done; but in more, it may be, by farr then I needed to have done. your ſelf, from a right opinion of the thing before, may ſeem to have a very little, or nothing at all, to do with this Letter, though written to you; and from your great accuracy and Criticallneſs, I might have fear'd it ſhould come under your Eye. But you know how to excuſe as well as how to judge; and *I* was willing it ſhould goe through your Hand to ſome perſons (who *I* think too much want ſuch a thing) that ſo it might have ſome authority from you which it cannot have from its *Author*. For though, Sir,

have shew'd that such Marriages are not against the *Law of Nature, of God, nor of the Land*; yet, Sir, such an ones Good word as yours, will bequeath a *Strength* to the argument *I* have brought, which perhaps would not be seen without it; and your approbation will make Mens Fancyes submit to truth, when otherwise *I* could have very little Hope from their Reason: a thing which now a dayes, in most men, is conquered by *Humor*, and Overwhelmed by *prejudice*. However, Sir, if you will please to think well of this *Paper*, and will give me that share in your *Love*, which *I* have had hitherto be-

yond my Deserts, I shall the l[illegible] matter what others think of it, [illegible] me.

Honour'd Sir,

Your, &c.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAg. 19. l. 9. read *First*. p. 25. l. 16. blot out *Joseph*. p. 26. l. 4. *assert*. p. 31. l. 4. *and in* Rehoboam. p. 41. l. 1. *and a promise*. p. 42. l. 13. *was* afterwards. p. 45. l. 3. *satis*. p. 46. l. 18. for *patriarcks* read *Nations*. p. 60. l. 1. *grown*. p. 81. l. 1. *one* more. p. 83. l. 6. *is not* inverted. p. 84. l. 11. blot out *he*. p. 96. l. 19. yet *as* in. p. 97. l. 2. *Wife*. p. 100. l. 10. for *forced* read *Freed*.